

**Remarks Given by
Lieutenant Governor Becky Skillman
January 15, 2007, Indianapolis, IN
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration**

It's great to be with you as we celebrate the life of one of our most beloved leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

We have just started a new calendar year, a new legislative session, and in many ways we have started a new future for our state. Indiana is growing. We are moving forward, our economy is speeding up, and we are seeing new opportunities for Hoosiers every day.

Those opportunities come from many places, because we have tremendous resources in Indiana. By far, the single greatest resource we have is our people. People who care about the future of this community and our state—who have the means and the desire to make life better and to help your friends and neighbors.

Today, our state and federal offices, post offices, and banks across America are closed in remembrance of Dr. King. Many people have a day off work, in his honor. But this is not a day to waste. That would not honor Dr. King's memory. Today is a day to celebrate his powerful inspiration and the strong legacy he left. It is a day to remember Dr. King's fight for freedom, equality, and dignity, for all races and people.

Dr. King understood the great importance of an individual life. He understood, that the only reason his words mattered, was because people matter. He saw a country that was on the path to self-destruction, one man, one woman at a time. And he took the opportunities available to help fix what was so terribly wrong.

The America he knew was very different from the one we live in today. Our society was dysfunctional. It imposed unspeakable restraints on the freedom of a huge number of Americans. It was a time when "separate but equal" made a mockery of the principles that gave America a chance at greatness.

It was a time when the nation turned a blind eye to a host of indignities that should have shamed us. But Dr. King knew the time had come to make

America see—to help the nation look at her people and do something to correct the injustice so long ignored.

Dr. King's voice shook us to action. It was not easy, and it was not pleasant. America was not ready for change. But change came anyway. Dr. King was the herald who announced it. Nearly forty years later his words still echo in our lives.

We can see Dr. King's influence in every corner of American society. Here in Indiana, I hope we continue to pursue the causes Dr. King stood for—the causes for which he died.

Dr. King had a servant's heart. He was serving all of us. We are the individuals who benefit from his life's work. To honor his legacy, I want to encourage us to keep moving forward. Make your life the best it can be. Reach out to your friends and neighbors and give them something of yourself. Serve others the way Dr. King served us.

It has been said that great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us every day. As I have traveled our state, I have met thousands of people, from all walks of life, who serve others in all sorts of ways. They all share a common trait.

None of them believe they are doing anything special.

But by taking advantage of the small opportunities every day, they are accomplishing great things and making a tremendous difference in the lives of others.

Dr. King understood the importance of improving the quality of life for all Americans. We want to see that legacy of positive change continue by improving the lives of all Hoosiers.

Everything we do, every policy we write, every problem we tackle – it's all because Hoosiers are gaining something from it—better jobs, better schools, better futures.

Indiana can be a place of prosperity because people are free to be who they are. Free to be individuals who have the power to impact the lives of their friends and neighbors.

Today we officially recognize Dr. King's life and the impact he had on each of us. Every day should be a day to celebrate his legacy. Anything you do—no matter how small—to improve your life, or the life of someone else, will be a tribute to him. Together, we can bring great changes. There can be no better way to honor Dr. King and keep his dream alive.

Thank you.